

Doctor of Creative Industries

Project 3:

# *The Stylised Version of You<sup>®</sup>*

*(‘What’s Mime Got To Do With It?’)*

## Workbook, VODcasts & Commentary

This final Doctoral project examines the application of mime performance techniques to the corporate communication context. Its particular focus is on the physicality or body-language aspects of inter-professional communication and is manifest in multi-media forms, as follows:

Professional Workbook: The Stylised Version of You<sup>®</sup>  
VODcasts Series (1 – 9): The Stylised Version of You<sup>®</sup>  
Written Commentary: ‘What’s Mime Got To Do With It?’

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## KEY WORDS:

Body Language, Mime, Multi-disciplinarity, Inter-disciplinarity, Corporeal, Physicality, Stylisation, Corporate Communication, Leadership, Corporate Coaching, Professional Communication

*'What's Mime Got To Do With It?'*

*The Stylised Version of You<sup>®</sup> - academic paper*

This paper was first presented at the *Engendering Leadership* Conference in Perth, Western Australia, on 22 July 2008. It also includes additional relevant material from Doctoral Project 2, titled; *'Music Mime & Metamorphosis'* (Willems 2008).

## ABSTRACT:

*What has Mime got to do with Corporate Communication?*

*As a professional Mime artist on both stage and screen for more than 25 years, the author has been adapting and applying the techniques of Mime to the corporate communication context over a number of years, coaching corporate CEOs, Executives and Managers, representing both public and private sector corporations and organisations. This unusual inter-contextual skill transfer is the subject of both a book (The Stylised Version of You®) and series of VODcasts by the author, which form part of the author's Doctoral Research and from which this paper is substantially drawn and accompanies.*

*The author's professional background is multi-disciplinary – encompassing theatre, television, media, music, tertiary education and corporate training contexts. It is also inter-disciplinary – concerned with the commonality of different artistic media and forms and how, where and why these professional disciplines: intersect, interact, and inform each other – and therefore how they support each other - rather than losing creative/professional opportunities because of areas where they might conflict.*

*This paper examines in particular the physicality of presentation and communication – beyond 'generic' body-language analysis. It involves the analysis, manipulation and stylisation of human physicality to support and enhance individual inter-professional communication, and how mime performance skills specifically, inform that process.*

*This paper discusses*

- *leadership and the role of professional communication in leadership*
- *how mime techniques clarify and enhance that professional communication*
- *adaptations and stylisations which may need to be applied in that context*



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## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP:

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet the requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signed:.....

Date:.....



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## Introduction: the Journey, the Focus:

This six-month Project represents the third and final in a trilogy of Doctoral projects.

Both individually and collectively these three projects, in conjunction with their respective written commentaries, are intended to:

- create new professional works
- illuminate and extend professional practice
- examine relevant professional contexts
- expand those contexts by establishing the works within and beyond their own individual contexts
- draw together, through multi/inter-disciplinarity, disparate fields of practice into credible, cohesive works.

In so doing, these academic/professional projects are intended to contribute to the creation of new knowledge, both within and across those disparate fields.

Whilst my *Doctoral* focus on multi/inter-disciplinarity is comparatively recent, this journey actually began professionally more than 30 years ago with my initial entry into the world of the professional artist through Music. Music eventually led me into the theatre, which in turn led me comprehensively into and through the fields of mime performance and television to where I stand professionally today - as an educator in the tertiary, creative, and corporate sectors.

As that educator, all of my diverse and disparate professional knowledge, specialist expertise and experience, have coalesced into this, the *Doctor of Creative Industries*, which provides the opportunity, focus and framework within which to explore how creativity works, both individually and collaboratively, and how it can be adapted and applied to a variety of professional contexts.

## **The Projects:**

The first manifestation of this practice-led exploration came with the successful completion of my *first* Doctoral Project, ***Blind Collaboration***. This is a process where individual musicians collaborate on the recording of an album of contemporary music, unheard, uncontacted, and therefore completely uninfluenced by each other. Both the resulting album, *Once in a While*, and its associated written commentary, *Project 1: Blind Collaboration* (Willems 2007), make manifest the specific outcomes of the creative/artistic/research process: how it evolved, how it was managed, how it was influenced by the particular artists involved, and how the Blind Collaboration process ultimately shaped the final musical work (this is also discussed further in Project 2 VODcasts – refer below).

My *second* project, ***Music, Mime & Metamorphosis***, consisting of a series of VODcasts, accompanied and supported by written commentary, both follows logically on from and builds upon *Blind Collaboration* by examining the non-musical aspects of musical performance, particularly in relation to taking the album's multi-instrumental works and situating those in the live, solo, music performance context. In exploring this, my view and approach are focussed through the lens of Mime, utilising its techniques of physical clarity, conciseness, and choreographed performance in which I am - with a 25 year career as a professional mime artist - highly experienced. This Mime background and focus provides a rich source of technique and stylisation with which to experiment creatively, aesthetically and practically.

This, the *third* and final of these projects, ***The Stylised Version of You***<sup>®</sup>, explores this inter-disciplinary application of Mime techniques still further in terms of both content and context, by applying these specialist performance techniques to corporate, business, or inter-professional communication. This has resulted in a professional Workbook, titled, *The Stylised Version of You*<sup>®</sup>. This professional Workbook is the principal outcome of this practice-led research and as such is, in order to engage with the business sector, deliberately not written in 'academic language', but has been specifically written as a professional, practical, user-friendly workbook – the contents of which are able to be utilised on a practical day-to-day basis in the corporate/professional workplace. The workbook is accompanied by an associated short series of VODcasts. Supporting documentation consists of this (academic) written commentary, titled ***'What's Mime Got To Do With It?'***. All of these together provide analysis of specific techniques applied to, and

illustrative examples of, the body-language (or *physicality*) aspects of inter-professional communication, in such a way as to satisfy both the academic and professional sectors.

### **Research Outcomes:**

Taken together these three, six-month Projects, which are based in and informed by more than three decades of professional practice across: music; stage performance; television; corporate communication; design; and tertiary education sectors - together with the underpinning research into each of those professional contexts - comprehensively investigate, demonstrate and incorporate the notion of multi/inter-disciplinarity.

Throughout this practice-led doctoral research process my imperatives for all three projects have been:

- 1. Academic rigour**
- 2. Professional credibility**
- 3. Commercial viability**

By maintaining this focus throughout, the three projects have produced specific, workable, measurable, and potentially commercial outcomes, manifest in different media - music; written word; audio/visual and digital - which clearly demonstrate both the potential and the effectiveness of reconciling disparate fields of practice by applying creativity and innovation to, within, and across those fields of practice.

The processes of these projects explore, expose and exploit areas where disparate and apparently conflicting fields of practice successfully and effectively intersect, interact and inform each other rather than conflict with each other, thereby adding value to each, both individually and collectively.

This approach is consistent with and makes manifest the most fundamental tenet of 'Creative Industries': the bringing together of disparate fields of practice. Its exploration in this Doctoral context situates and applies the research equally across both professional and academic spheres, thereby effectively reconciling the often irreconcilable 'professional/practice' and 'academic/theorist' points of view.

## Interdisciplinarity: the Corporate Challenge:

In contextual terms, my professional background is multi-disciplinary – encompassing theatre, television, media, music, tertiary education and corporate training contexts. As such it has inevitably been extremely diverse. My professional focus has been and continues to be 'specialised multi-skilling', enabling me to sustain a viable professional arts career over some 30 years. It is also inter-disciplinary, and much of the evolution of my professional activity and career has been concerned with the commonality of, and across, different artistic media and forms. These inter-relationships manifest themselves, consciously and unconsciously, through a range of ongoing professional activities in which I continue to be involved and which I inevitably bring to both the tertiary context, currently as a Lecturer in Performance and Design in a university, and also across various other tertiary/professional environments including actor training, television presenter coaching, corporate communication coaching etc.

Australian author Peter Carey has suggested that, 'you follow your life, you choose the thing that energises you at the time' (2006, p. 14). Consistent with that philosophy, that which currently energises me and has held my professional attention for some time is how my performance skills - particularly Mime performance skills - and experience apply to corporate, or inter-professional communication. Because, in professional terms as both a mime artist and corporate coach, reconciling those two things is precisely what I do.

However, applying mime to the corporate sector is not necessarily as straightforward as one might imagine. Having worked across a diversity of professional/artistic contexts I have observed some cynicism, perhaps some 'fear of the unknown'; a jaundiced view of those 'other' professional fields. This manifests in the corporate view of those working in the arts and creative industries being somewhat glibly described as, '*Arty Wankers*'. Conversely, the arts' view of the corporate sector can often be summed up by an equally dismissive, '*Commercial Crap*'. However, where there is almost unanimous agreement is in the case of those of us who work in universities, who are *universally* regarded by both of the above professional sectors as, '*Academic Wankers - with no professional credibility whatsoever*'.

Whilst there may be an element of truth to 'all of the above', rather than getting bogged down in name-calling, I find it much more useful and productive to examine and exploit how and where these disparate and diverse professional fields:

- intersect
- interact
- inform

each other, and therefore how they support each other, rather than where they might conflict.

## Definitions & Context:

The term 'corporate' can present some difficulties of connotation these days, what with the recent proliferation of high-profile corporate collapses. We have been witness to (in)famous Australian and international examples of corporate incompetence, dishonesty and corruption, apparently (judging by media reports) underpinned by a complete lack of ethics, morals, or integrity in senior management. So much so that the term 'corporate' has become tainted in the minds of many.

However, I use the term 'corporate' in a different sense.

The Macquarie Dictionary (1992, p. 99) lists the words **Corporeal** – defined as, '*of the nature of the physical body*'; **Corporate** – defined as, '*pertaining to a united body, as of persons*'; and **Corporation** – defined as, '*an association of individuals*', adjacent to one another. One would like to think that this is more than mere alphabetical coincidence; that the words actually bear some significant connection to one another. Indeed they do. And it is in this sense – the *association of individuals*, together with the *nature of the physical body* – that my work and research resides. Therefore, I am suggesting that the negative perceptual definition of the word 'corporate' – i.e. large, uncaring, corrupt multinational - can be jettisoned for the time being and the title applied in a broader and indeed truer sense, in its 'corporeal' sense. But, whatever type of corporation, whatever *association of individuals*, that association of individuals will generally have a 'Leader'. We need then, in the first instance, to briefly examine the notion of corporate 'Leadership'.

## Corporate Leadership:

There seems to be some divergence of views about what constitutes 'leadership'.

Parry & Hansen (2007, p. 282) for instance, suggest that leadership is more about the 'Corporate Story' of the organisation; that the 'Story becomes the Leader', because 'people follow the story more so than they follow the person who composes or tells the story'. By contrast, Helen Besly (2004, p. 1), Managing Director of Rowland, a company specialising in high level corporate communication, suggests that the very opposite of the Parry & Hansen view is the case, that 'despite the proliferation of communication channels, the individual's voice is still the most credible and relied on...*that makes corporate storytelling an essential part of the CEO's job*' (emphasis added).

Whichever of these views is correct, and it may well be a bit of both, I suggest that the *person telling the story* needs to do so in a confident, credible and convincing manner, otherwise 'the story' itself will have neither initial impact nor ongoing life. Ultimately, the fundamental requirement is clarity and quality of communication.

But are corporate leaders always familiar or indeed comfortable, with that notion?

In my corporate work over a number of years, I have observed a certain insecurity in some of those 'getting to the top'. And, whilst unconfirmed by any quantitative research, the empirical evidence certainly suggests that this is not a function of gender, appearing to afflict both male and female executives equally - although some might be more reluctant to acknowledge it than others. What some new CEOs do not immediately recognise and can be unpleasantly surprised to learn when they finally reach their sought-after high-ranking position, is that being the leader of an organisation is a fundamentally different job from being the outstanding accountant, lawyer, engineer, or whatever they had been up to this point. Their 'new job' is not just a '*new job*', but a *different job* – entirely. The new position is no longer about being technically proficient, it is suddenly much more about *communication*.



This view is supported by Mike Hanley writing in the (12 April 2006) *Australian Financial Review's Boss Magazine* (e-version), who noted that there is increasingly, 'an explicit recognition that leadership is a skill distinct from technical management ability'. Hanley further cites Chip Macfarlane - 'director and master coach at the Institute of Executive Coaching' – who suggests that:

many lose their sense of self in the struggle to get to the top... (they) went through the workplace with a certain set of norms, and now they are being asked to do something different – not just from what they were doing before, but different from their predecessor.

(Macfarlane cited by Hanley 2006)

It is indeed no longer about being technically proficient, about doing what one did previously, it is now about: *imparting information*; it is about *communication*; and it is about *shaping perceptions*.

In this context, Helen Besly (2004, p. 1), suggests that 'every interaction...is an opportunity to influence perceptions, both of the CEO and the organisation...it's the moment of influence and it's precious...*the moment when the CEO and the company are judged*' (emphasis added). So it is about representing not only oneself, but an entire organisation - and doing so comfortably, confidently and credibly. Whether they want to or not, the CEO has suddenly become the 'personification' of their organisation and this demands an entirely new set of skills – *communication skills* – at the very highest professional level, and immediately. Yet these are the very skills in which they may have had little experience or training. They are essentially 'non-performers' thrust onto the Stage to perform – some more willingly than others, but often inadequately equipped or trained to do so. And, whilst assumptions may be made about a CEO's 'natural ability' or 'charisma' to get them through, as Hanley (2006) quite correctly observes, 'the right traits don't always appear automatically in those at the top'.

So, if these communication skills do indeed *not* always appear automatically, then Corporate Coaching comes into the equation.

## Corporate Coaching:

In broad terms, corporate communication coaching is not particularly new. It is clear from even the most cursory scan of the available professional literature, that bookshop shelves are groaning with any number of books and publications (as well as consultancies) extensively covering the topic of Corporate Communication. Many of these are typically generalist in nature and deal with the broad scope of the field: written communication; presentation; inter-office communication; meeting procedures; internet etiquette, etc., yet are reasonably detailed, in a general kind of way, within those respective areas of focus.

A recent typical example is a book titled, *Communicating as Professionals* (Mohan, McGregor, Saunders & Archee 2004). This is essentially a 400 page textbook, 'addressed to students undertaking professional studies and to professional graduates wishing to maintain their competence in communication as part of their profession' (p. 3). As such it provides a detailed study of 'communication theory and professional practice' (p. 2) under broader headings including: organisational communication; managerial communication; interviewing and negotiating; the nature of research; writing skills, etc. The word 'theory' is one upon which I wish to briefly focus here. This is a good, comprehensive book which focuses upon the theoretical background, definitions and contexts associated with professional communication, as much as it does on the practical application of that communication theory.

My own approach is somewhat different – it is certainly more specific. It is certainly less theoretical. Or, perhaps more accurately, it draws upon *different* theories, from different contexts, and applies those different theories in a different way.

It draws upon the theories, context, and techniques, of Mime.

Given that as a performance artform, Mime (well-executed) enables one to clearly create a character, impart a narrative, and engage the audience, my approach in the corporate context similarly involves using that same mime technique to achieve comparable communication outcomes, albeit in a 'softer' style. Having analysed and assessed the nature and manifestation of an individual's particular physicality, we are then in a position to utilise that to advantage to enhance their inter-professional communication.

The word 'individual' is very much the operative word here. The reason I often find myself telling corporate clients that mine is not a 'sausage factory' approach, is because it is not. It is entirely tailored to each individual person. And, as Hanley (2006) points out, 'the demand for coaching has been boosted by a corporate culture that increasingly embraces the twin concepts of leadership and the self...it's *you* that will make people follow or not' (emphasis added). It is indeed *you*. The Executive. The Individual. The Leader.

So, in the new position in which the individual executive finds themselves, there is a danger of that executive not communicating sufficiently clearly and/or not communicating at all. In this context Hanley cites Frank Francis (Chief Operating Officer at insurance company Vero), who refers to his own experience of having created a misperception about his professional self, where:

the people who worked with me directly...understood me well, but I wasn't always portraying that same image to others outside that circle...you might just have a 15-second window...in which to make an impression...(the coach) made me aware that *people have different perceptions* of me that differ from who I really am' (emphasis added).

(Francis, cited by Hanley 2006)

So it is indeed about shaping perceptions; of the individual and by extension, their organisation. Or at the very least, not allowing erroneous *mis*-perceptions to be created and perpetuated. But what constitutes perception?

An extraordinarily perceptive definition of the nature of perception comes from Jonathan Miller, who, in addition to enjoying an outstanding reputation throughout the world in the performing arts and television, has also 'held academic posts in neuro-psychology on both sides of the Atlantic' (Bragg 1995). Miller describes 'perception' in the following terms:

the whole point about perception is that it is not...the experience that is delivered by the structure of the work that is in front of the eye, that it's a *negotiation* between the creative viewer and the object that is in front of the eye - and that hunches, guesses, prejudices, preoccupations, interests and so forth, alter the experience so that what you know, what you think, what you imagine, what you anticipate, have an irreversible effect on what you experience. And this isn't a sign of the fickle instability of the character. It's a sign of the structure of perception in general. That's what perception is like, it's a process of *guessing* as well as *seeing* what is out there (emphasis added)

(Miller 1995)

So, whoever our audience is and whatever perceptual filter they bring to our presentation, if they are indeed *guessing* as well as *seeing*, then we need to be as clear and unambiguous as possible in order to create the perception (not mis-perception) that we *want* to create in the audience, whether that audience is 500 people in an auditorium, or five people in meeting room.

However, before we can shape or 'influence perceptions' we need to know what kind of perceptions we are creating; how we are creating them; and, if necessary, how to change them. Becoming aware of, and changing perceptions to reflect a more accurate and appropriate professional reality, is in my view, essentially what corporate coaching is all about. However, one cannot coach every executive on the planet, even if they wanted to be coached. What one *can* do is to provide a means by which individual executives are able to 'pick-and-choose' what they need in terms of individual coaching. A means by which they are able to specifically and individually explore their own possibilities of changing, influencing, or managing, perceptions – and therefore enhancing their individual professional communication.

The Workbook, '*The Stylised Version of You*<sup>®</sup>', which this paper supports, is designed to go at least some way towards providing that means.

## The Workbook:

The Workbook is not a theoretical treatise on communication. It is not a textbook explicating the theories and definitions of such things as Kinesics; Proxemics; Chronemics; Haptics; or Vocalics – although through its content, it inevitably touches upon virtually all of these 'classifications of non-verbal communication' (Mohan et. al. 2004, p. 59).

The book is a Workbook, a 'Briefcase Workbook', specifically written for established and emerging executives and professionals.

It is referred to as a 'briefcase workbook' because it is designed to slip readily into the executive briefcase for quick reference on the way to that next presentation. Beyond the 'quick-reference' style of the book, it provides more importantly for the detailed and ongoing analysis of, reflection upon, enhancement, and implementation of presenting techniques for the longer-term development of professional executive presentations - in particular, the 'physicality', non-verbal, or body-language aspects of presenting.

### **Background:**

The material in this book has emerged from my work, over almost three decades, in the, some might say, 'rarefied' world of Mime. Mime, as my performance specialisation, sits very comfortably within the broader performance contexts of music, theatre, television, and corporate communication - as well as design (and consulting engineering).

When we think of Mime we tend to think of the traditional 'white face', striped shirt, black tights (heaven forbid!) 'person-trapped-in-a-glass-box' cliché. This is unfortunate. It is unfortunate because it is so wrong. It is so far from the reality, and it denies such a rich resource: for performance; for presenting; for corporate communication. As odd a combination as mime and corporate communication might appear to be, there is, as discussed in detail below, an inescapable logic in applying the performance clarity of mime to the non-verbal aspects of corporate or professional communication.

Having created, performed and extensively toured several solo mime productions for the stage and also adapted mime for the very different contexts of film and television, what has become most abundantly clear is just how technically rich, how communicatively valuable, and how readily adaptable, mime is. Mime both demands and teaches: clarity; physical awareness; exacting detail; emotional engagement; and performance discipline. Mime teaches the performer how to hold a moment - and how to hold an audience.

And, if you can keep a *theatre* audience engaged for an hour - without saying a word; if you can make them laugh or cry - without saying a word; if you can convince them that the 'piece-of-air' you are holding, or looking at, or watching go past, is a flower, a glass, a butterfly, a sports car, a lover - without saying a word, then you are well on your way to

engaging, and convincing, a *corporate* audience of your message – whatever that message might be.

But, the Workbook is *not* about teaching executives how to be mime artists.

### **Topics:**

What the Workbook *is* about is bringing together and distilling the diverse and apparently unrelated fields of mime and corporate communication into a symbiotic relationship. It is about taking both the theoretical underpinnings, and the performance practice of mime and applying those to corporate communication in a practical, achievable, individually adaptable way. And by doing so, enabling most of the issues, insecurities and pitfalls which most of us face when we are called upon to make a professional presentation, to be addressed.

In that context the Workbook is largely restricted to the 'non-verbal', however, my definition of non-verbal includes not only body-language, but also encompasses other non-verbals such as: the physical space; preparation; rehearsal; and performance anxiety, all of which ultimately impact on both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of presenting.

### **Structure:**

With no disrespect intended to either, the Workbook is not '*War & Peace*', nor is it a 400 page textbook.

Consistent with its practice-focussed approach, the chapters are deliberately quite short, to the point, and immediately useful in an everyday, practical way. Each colour-coded chapter offers some background and contextual information (and indeed some theory) followed by practical tips and techniques to enhance one's ability to present; and to take some of the fear out of presenting.

This book brings the application of mime performance skills to inter-professional communication, with particular and detailed emphasis upon the 'physicality' of presentation and communication, beyond generic body-language analysis. And whilst Alan Pease (1981/94) has become justifiably famous for his excellent and entertaining books on Body Language – writings which may indeed be useful 'to obtain a better understanding of life's most complex event – a face-to-face encounter with another person' (p. 3), my approach, whilst informed by the broad principles proposed and generally accepted by Pease and others (including Desmond Morris in various highly credentialed publications over the decades such as *'The Naked Ape'*, *'The Human Zoo'* and *'Manwatching'* etc., about 'species-specific' physicality of interaction), is less general and more specifically tailored - 'individualised' - introducing and applying the notion of individual 'physical personality' and the 'physicality of performance'.

Mime is, by definition, non-verbal. Mime is 'stylised body-language'. Mime demands a specific and detailed focus on the *physical*. It needs to be acknowledged however, that there are others who take issue with a specific focus on body-language; on the physicality of communication.

## Myths, Furphies, and Paranoia:

In particular, Mohan et. al (2004), citing the writings of Knapp (1992), refer to 'Myths surrounding the subject of non-verbal communication' (p. 58). The first of Knapp's myths articulated is the *Isolation Myth*. In earlier writings, Knapp (1980) states that, 'nonverbal communication should not be studied as an isolated unit, but as an inseparable part of the total communication process' (p. 21), and that 'verbal and non-verbal systems are heavily interrelated and interdependent' (Mohan et. al. 2004, p. 58). Of course they are.

However, if one wants to pursue singing as a career then one must first specifically train the voice. One must apply specific attention and techniques to the vibration of the vocal chords; the mechanics of the breathing apparatus, etc. In order to do that one must first deal with the vocal chords *in isolation*, and then reintegrate that enhanced specific focus into the broader context of the rest of the body, and how that in turn also moves, and therefore influences, the vocal chords.

A tennis player has to focus on the specific detail of how their fingers grip the racquet; then on the placement of the feet; then on the turn of the upper body; then on the follow-through etc. This is specific, detailed, focus and attention, which cannot occur without first 'isolating' that part of the body.

Similarly, with the non-verbal aspects of communication, as discussed below, if the presenter's body-language does not match their words, if, as Knapp (1980) suggests, 'nonverbal behaviour can contradict verbal behaviour' (p. 12), then to address that contradiction, that mismatch, one must first become *aware* of the physical 'issue' and what is causing it. Then, *isolate* the relevant part of the body, in order to apply specific focus to that part of the body, and then amend or choreograph – i.e., *control* the movement of that part, in the context of the whole body - precisely so that the physicality and the words *do* match in a whole-of-body sense. There is indeed little to be gained by deliberately making the physical so isolated, so separate, so remote, as to mismatch with the verbal. Of course the two have to (eventually) be integrated. That is precisely the purpose of the isolation in the first instance; to identify the specific problem, so that the problem may be addressed.

Following on from Knapp's *Isolation Myth* is *The Key to Success Myth*. As Mohan et. al. (p. 58) explain, 'this myth assures us that an understanding of the secret codes of non-verbal behaviour will make us successful salespersons or managers...that with this knowledge we will be able to 'read' others'.

There is of course nothing 'secret' about the interpretation of body-language. The suggestion that it *is* somehow 'secret' is a complete furphy. It is abundantly clear that as human beings we constantly 'read' others, whether we have specific knowledge in the interpretation of body-language or not. Unconscious certainly, but 'secret', never. In fact I fundamentally disagree with the authors' assertion that, as 'Knapp argues, people are very much aware of their non-verbal behaviour' (Mohan et. al. p. 58). In my experience as a specialist performance coach in physicality and body-language, it has been demonstrated innumerable times that one of the most *unconscious* aspects of professional presentation is the non-verbal. The vast majority of presenters – even very experienced ones - are generally not aware of their physicality and what that might or might not be expressing. This is particularly evident when they are under the influence of performance anxiety and stress, where they will manifest that anxiety and stress with unconscious, extraneous, distracting movements. And it is precisely in those



circumstances where the messages sent out by the verbal and the non-verbal become mismatched.

The reality is that whilst we have each been living fairly comfortably in our bodies for the past 20, 30, 40 or 50 years - we very rarely think about what our bodies are expressing. We assume that, by default, our body will reflect our words, emotions and attitudes; and generally it does. But there are times when we do not want our body to reflect the fact that, whilst giving a presentation, we are crippled by fear and desperate to disappear. Paradoxically, we need to find a way of physically 'lying' in order to create a different, yet 'truer' perception, of who we are and the information we are trying to impart. And it is precisely in those circumstances where *awareness*, *isolation* and *control* need to be applied. However, the Knapp/Mohan et. al. notion that body-language consists of 'secret codes' and that we 'can control and adapt it to prevent others from 'breaking the code"' (p. 58), seems both inaccurate and unnecessarily paranoid. The assertion that there are 'many professed experts functioning in the persuasive marketplace, offering quick advice on how we can use non-verbal codes or formulae to take advantage of clients or rivals', seems to imply some kind of professional espionage: a 'secret society' of body-language code-makers and breakers. All of which seems a little far-fetched.

What we are *actually* talking about is fundamental, instinctive, normal human behaviour and body-language. Body-language which we all read, interpret, and display - consciously and unconsciously - in our own individual way, every minute of every day. Styling that fundamental body-language is a long way from 'secret codes'. It is a galaxy removed from 'formulae', because, as illustrated below, the individual nature of our individual physical personalities precludes the formulaic; the 'sausage-factory' approach to individual physicality and professional communication.

The one Knapp 'myth' as articulated by Mohan et. al. (p. 58), with which I *do* concur, is *The Single Meaning Myth* – that there is a single meaning to be interpreted from any given gesture. Non-verbal movements do of course convey different meanings for different people in different contexts and different cultures. A particularly good example of this is illustrated in Chapter 5 of the Workbook.

Notwithstanding the views of Knapp, Mohan and others, my own prime concern lies not with theoretical generalisations about, nor definitions of, non-verbal communication. It lies not with solving global non-verbal cultural differences. It lies not with creating sausage-factory formulae, nor compiling secret non-verbal codes. My immediate and

prime concern is discovering and articulating the means and techniques by which individual, professional presenters, with individual physical personalities, are better able to express themselves clearly, confidently, concisely, coherently, cohesively, and comprehensively – whatever the culture and whatever the circumstances.

What it comes down to is: clarity of movement; clarity of communication; clarity of interpretation; and fundamental integrity between the verbal and the non-verbal.

Articulating and achieving that, is the purpose of the Workbook.

## Corporate Coaching & Mime:

If we are to believe Albert Mehrabian's (1981, p. 76) oft-quoted figures, then in terms of creating perceptions; those 'first impressions' of people we meet and they of us, whether in a 10 second introduction or a 20 minute presentation, then these figures are very telling:

- **55%** Visual/Body Language - how we look, how we carry ourselves
- **38%** Vocal - how we sound, the tone of our voice
- **7%** Words - the actual words we say

Indeed, according to Knapp (1980, p. 15), citing Birdwhistell, non-verbal communication commands an even greater percentage of communicated meaning - 'more than 65 percent of the social meaning is carried on the non-verbal band'.

So, if the visual, the physicality, the body language impression is the most important, then we need to make certain that, whatever perceptions are formed, they are *informed*, by body-language, by physicality, by movement, which is both clear and concise. To achieve that, it needs to be *choreographed*. And, in terms of choreographing our physicality in order to clarify our communication, in whatever context, it comes down to the techniques of Mime.

What's Mime got to do with it? Just about *everything*.

Because, in terms of the essentials of Communication, there is nothing clearer, nothing more precise, nothing more *concise*, than Mime, and there is therefore an inescapable logic in applying that to professional communication. The parallels are these:

- **Mime** is about using clarity and definition of movement to create illusions, and shape perceptions
- **Professional Communication** is about, if not 'creating illusions', then certainly it is about shaping perceptions.

Many people associate Mime with, and indeed often define it as, 'exaggerated gestures' and 'facial expressions'. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mime is, in fact, entirely the opposite. It is about *clarity* of movement; it is about *uncluttered* movement; and it is about *well-defined* movement. It is not about 'exaggerated' movement, it is *all* about *selective* movement.

Leading British Mime exponent and teacher, Desmond Jones, described in 1980 by the then Director of the London Mime Festival, Joseph Seelig, as one of Britain's leading authorities on the art of mime and analysis of movement, as well as a teacher and performer of international reputation, refers to:

pure mime...that does not need to interpret words by exaggerated gesture and facial expression...an art that...*reflects thoughts and states of being through controlled movement of the body.* (emphasis added)

(Jones 1980, p. 1)

And through that controlled movement of the body, mime is able to; take a moment, hold it, control it, define it, and draw the audience into infinitesimally tiny detail within it.

This is the great subtlety and infinite power of mime. Mime provides the capacity for 'exquisite physicalisation (which) achieves as much...from absolute stillness as (it) does from frenzied movement' (Evans, 1986). This is a product of mime's 'compelling sensitivity' (Evans, 1986), a sensitivity which by utilising, manipulating and contrasting that 'absolute stillness' with *selective* movement, provides unparalleled performance clarity, precision, and concise communication with the audience. 'In mime you have to make sure you don't present anything extraneous, that's not precisely required to impart information' (Willems – Sydney Morning Herald 1986).

But to achieve that clarity, that precision, that uncluttered communication, no discussion on Mime is complete without detailed reference to that most crucial body part - the Chest.

## **The Chest:**

As noted above, surprising as it will be to many, mime is not about the face and hands. Mime performance is mostly about, centred upon, and made manifest through, the articulation of the Chest. The Chest is the centre of our emotional expression – even/particularly when seen from a distance. Etienne Decroux, regarded by many as ‘the father of mime’, describes (1985) ‘precedence of the body over the face and arms’, when he refers, in corporeal mime, to the ‘hierarchy of the instruments of expression...as follows: *first the body, then the arms and hands, and last, the face*’ (p. 68) (emphasis added).

In Mime, *the Chest* provides the most fundamental manifestation of the expressive body.

The Chest shows our direction, attention, intention, joy, anger, aggression, depression, tension, relaxation. In other words, pretty much the entire range of human emotions – as well as weight, force, physical effort, and physical involvement. The Chest also acts as the centre of impetus from which all other movement emanates. The Chest is certainly the ‘driver’ of a Mime artist’s performance, whether creating a character, an illusion, simply moving across the stage, or expressing deep emotion; the Chest shows it all and is, largely unconsciously, read by the audience.

Given the Chest’s fundamental, indeed crucial, role in Mime, it is not surprising then that the Mime technique as developed and taught by ‘the originator of modern mime’, Etienne Decroux, and subsequently carried on by Decroux’s students and international Mime exponents such as Marcel Marceau, Jean-Louis Barrault, Desmond Jones, and their followers involves, demands - is indeed defined by - the *detailed articulation of the Chest*.

Desmond Jones, in describing Decroux's technique, concurs with and draws upon the words of Marcel Marceau - undoubtedly the world's most recognised and celebrated Mime artist:

as Marceau has said, 'anyone who wants to perform mime must first learn the grammar of Etienne Decroux'...learn(ing) a sense of style and precision indispensable to the modern mime...the infinite subtlety the body is capable of.

(Jones 1980, p. 2)

This 'grammar, precision, and infinite subtlety'; this expressive physical vocabulary, can be applied not just in the context of 'the modern mime' but is, in my experience, equally applicable beyond solely Mime performance to virtually any human performance context.

This physical control, subtlety and expression, is substantially achieved through the articulation of the Chest through its '10 Movements', which are in turn expressed through and incorporated within the basic articulations of: **Rotation** (left & right), **Inclination** (left, right, forward, back) and **Translation** (left, right, forward, back).

These 10 movements of the Chest explore the 'endless possibilities...of line and dynamic quality... reduced to the essentials' (Leabhart 1982, p. 46), either individually or (usually) in combination; articulating the Chest in such a way as to enable it, and therefore the body - and therefore the character - to clearly, concisely, and comprehensively communicate to an audience, the deepest inner emotions of that character; particularly from a distance. Through controlling and articulating the Chest, it is possible for the performer to convey whatever character they want to convey; whether that is 'you' as a character in performance, or a *Stylised Version of You*<sup>®</sup> (Willems 2008, professional Workbook), of whatever 'you' the performer wishes to convey (refer discussion below).

However, in order to effectively articulate the Chest through any and all of its 10 movements, the Chest must first be isolated, 'separated' from the rest of the body - certainly from the waist to which it is immediately attached. Generally speaking, human beings do not separate their Chest from their Waist; however, to enable the Chest to be articulated it needs to be unencumbered by the Waist and therefore the two have to be both notionally and physically separated; as do the other major body parts.

To reiterate, the process is, as described by Decroux (1978, p. 62); 'the head without the neck, the neck without the chest, *the chest without the waist*, the waist without the pelvis, the pelvis without the legs' (emphasis added). In the case of the Chest/Waist, this separation is achieved by 'lifting' the Chest away from the Waist through selective muscular control (including diaphragmatic control) and then maintaining a degree of 'selective tension' in performance.

The other crucial role played by this separating selective tension in the Chest is that of supporting, defining, and enhancing *stage presence*:

even when the speaking actor is not actually speaking he is physically present on the stage. There had to be an art, then, of standing and moving on the stage.

(Decroux 1978, pp. 9-10)

Maintaining a certain amount of tension in the Chest actually attracts the audience's eye, and holds it.

This is *Stage Presence*.

The added bonus for the performer/presenter is that this enhancement of stage presence, in addition to making the audience concentrate more closely on the performance, makes the performer/presenter themselves simply *feel* more confident. Because we as human beings manifest our basic emotions through our body-language; when we are depressed or intimidated our body/chest naturally and unconsciously collapses inwards, and when we are feeling positive and confident our body/chest naturally and unconsciously lifts and opens.

The physical 'lift' created by the Chest's selective tension referred to above, tends to feed back through the performer and literally lifts the sense of confidence of the performer. Therefore, by moving the Chest – by articulating it – we maintain some control of not only the audience's perception but, to some extent, how good (or otherwise) we feel about being where we are.

So, to restate the words of my original Mime teacher, Desmond Jones (1980), *'if it moves, control it'*. This entire concept is about control of what the body is doing, and therefore saying; it is about control of that 55% of a first impression; it is about control of the audience's focus and attention. It is about control of our physical *Presence*.

It also goes beyond our immediate physicality, to being in control of:

- the *Props* that we use
- the *Space* that we occupy

Just because someone walks onto a stage or podium in front of an audience, it does not necessarily follow that that audience is going to take any notice of them for more than about 5 or 10 seconds. As presenters or performers, we have to *make* the audience look at us. Not only do we have to make the audience look at us, but we have to make them look at whatever part of our body, or the surrounding environment, we want them to look at, and/or engage with.

This is 'performance'. This is managing audience perceptions. This is making the most of our 'Physical Personality'.

### **'Physical Personality':**

Just as each of us has a unique personality, we equally have a unique 'Physical Personality'. This is what we see, interpret and relate to, before any words are spoken. I am not referring here to 'species-generic' Body Language so often discussed and analysed. Whilst that of course contributes, what I refer to here is the utterly unique combination of factors; genetic, physical, historical and emotional, which manifest as our uniquely individual Physical Personality. Natural physical build, childhood injuries, cultural influences, ballet or sports training, illnesses, self-confidence, genetic inheritance – all these and more contribute to our physical personality and make up the unique person that each of us is, and which others recognise and relate to, even from a distance.

Based upon that premise, my coaching approach is similarly highly individualised, personalised, and adapted for each person in particular. Rather than avoiding or ignoring what exists, on the contrary, actually *utilising* that set of utterly unique, inherent, individual physical attributes, habits and idiosyncrasies, adapting the principles of mime performance to them and vice versa. This individually unique physical personality is the base material with which I work, in order to develop a credible presentation performance, *without changing the fundamental way the corporate presenter moves* - without losing the essential 'them-ness' of being physically who they individually are. As with the analysis, manipulation and stylisation of body-language in mime stage performance, we are equally applying the detailed *analysis, manipulation and stylisation* of individual human physicality to support, clarify, and enhance the non-verbal aspects of communication in the professional context. Therefore, in answer to that most commonly asked question: *'What do I do with my hands!?'* – there are indeed as many answers to that as there are people asking the question.

This diagnostic aspect; this analysis of how an individual uniquely moves and physically is, is the most crucial aspect of my individualised, tailored approach. And, if it is the most crucial, then it is equally the most gratifying aspect of my work; finding that unique answer to a unique problem, of how that unique physical personality manifests itself in the presentation context and how to stylise and maximise its benefits, rather than 'pretend it's not there'.

This leads us to the overarching concept of the *Stylised Version of You*<sup>®</sup>.

## The Stylised Version of You<sup>®</sup>:

One occasionally hears, in the theatre or television performance context, reference to 'naturalistic performance'.

I maintain the view however, based on more than 30 years' professional performance experience, that in any kind of public performance or presentation there is no such thing as 'naturalism'; only *'degrees of stylisation'*. Simply by virtue of the consciousness required to be applied to that performance: *'where is the spotlight?'; 'which camera is on me?'; 'hold that moment a bit longer for the audience response'*. There is, and certainly



always should be, that element of consciousness; that element of analysis; that element of 'performance'.

However, for many CEOs and executives, the whole notion of 'performance' may be something quite foreign. Indeed, some seem to regard the notion of 'performance' as 'faking it' and being insincere; inauthentic. However, as 'non-performers thrust onto the stage to perform', their situation demands that they acquire 'performance experience'; immediately. It is unrealistic to expect that this performance experience will simply descend upon them or instantaneously emerge organically. So, in the immediate term, they need guidance, direction, performance confidence; and most of all, they need some degree of 'choreography'. Because they are not actors, they are not trained to be actors and if they try to 'act', or be someone that they are not, they will simply not come across as genuine, because they are not being genuine, they are not being 'authentic'. And therein lies the very essence of my approach. Ultimately, the corporate presenter has to remain *fundamentally themselves*. As a 'corporate performer' they have to 'perform', yet still retain the essential 'them-ness' of who they are. What they therefore need is to develop *performance awareness*. And making the corporate 'performer' aware is about developing a consciousness in and of performance.

The very basics of choreographed performance teach us how to walk across a stage; how to take command of the space; how to engage an audience; how to clearly tell a story - how to embody that internal 'performance awareness'. One of the most effective ways of developing that performance awareness is by applying the principles of mime to stylise one's own, unique, individual Physical Personality, to develop what I refer to as *The Stylised Version of You*® (this is both a trademarked professional training concept/principle, and also the title of the Workbook which this paper accompanies).

The concept of the *Stylised Version of You*® can probably best be explained by the continuum drawn below.

This continuum in Figure 1 below shows at the left hand end: *You*. This is *Absolutely You*. This is the private 'You' that only your family sees – or that you yourself see in the mirror first thing in the morning.

This is the 'shorts and T-shirt' you - the 'unremarkable' You.

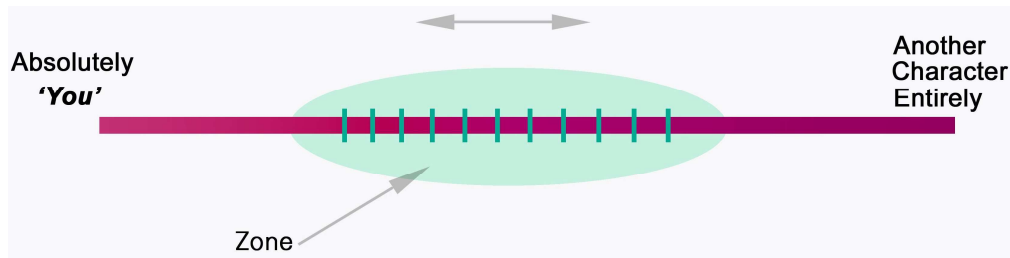


**Figure 1: *The Continuum***

At the opposite extreme of the continuum is absolutely another character - *Another Character Entirely*. This is where some actors go. This is where you completely lose yourself in another character entirely, and little if any of you yourself remains; a character, as Michael Caine (1990, pp. 98-99) describes, 'with whom you have absolutely nothing in common'. Where, like Caine, 'everything about (the character) was against my nature...*I submerged my own personality entirely and invented everything*' (emphasis added).

It is extremely unlikely that, in any given professional context, we would find ourselves at either extreme end of this continuum. It is unlikely that many of us would allow the 'Absolutely You' to be exposed to our professional contexts, and it is equally unlikely that - unless we are an actor of the calibre and experience of a Michael Caine - we would be so far removed from ourselves that we become a different person entirely. However, there is a Zone - loosely in the middle - within which we may find the version or versions of 'You' appropriate for any given professional presenting situation. Within that zone different versions of 'you' may be chosen beforehand to suit the particular professional context in which we might find ourselves (refer Figure 2 below).

For instance, in the case of a Board presentation we might select a more formal version of ourselves, slightly more 'removed' – tending more towards the right-hand end of the continuum. By contrast, a planning meeting between a few colleagues allows for a less formal, but still business-like version of you, more towards the left-hand end.



**Figure 2: *The Zone***

We undoubtedly do this every day. We do it intuitively, we do it regularly, and we generally do it fairly appropriately. However, intuitive as it is, there are some professional occasions and situations where a bit more forward planning is appropriate; more of a conscious and deliberate process than a 'she'll be right' approach. So we consciously choose beforehand both the extent of the 'Zone' and the appropriate position within the zone to establish our individual, *Stylised Version of You*<sup>®</sup>, never forgetting that whichever we choose, *it remains fundamentally YOU*.

Therefore, specifically in the corporate context, whilst we can and should remain our unique selves, there are *degrees* of stylisation which we can apply to our unique selves, enabling us to:

- control our physicality
- clarify our body-language
- communicate accurately that 55% of a 'first impression'
- create the professional perceptions that we want to create

But how do we determine what specific degree of stylisation is appropriate? Precisely where we choose to be within that zone, whichever is the most appropriate *Stylised Version of You*<sup>®</sup>, is determined essentially by two things: the **Content** of what we are presenting; and the **Context** in which we are presenting it.

## Content & Context:

If, as discussed above, there is indeed no such thing as naturalism, only 'degrees of stylisation', then I also maintain that the degree of stylisation appropriate for any given presenting situation is determined by both the *content* of the material being presented, and the *context* in which that material is being presented; whether in a theatrical play, a film, television program, or a corporate boardroom. Whatever kind of audience it is, they will have certain expectations of the presenter and their presentation. As Collins (1998, p. 12) suggests:

the audience may come to the proceedings feeling either ambivalent or goodwill towards the speaker. Most of them know why they are there and what they want to get out of the event: some clear insights and ideas on some points at issue *delivered in a clear, interesting and enjoyable way* (emphasis added).

(Collins 1998)

A formal presentation to an audience of 1000 in an auditorium, is different from a semi-formal presentation to an audience of 10 professional colleagues in a meeting room at lunchtime; is different from a presentation to the Board of an organisation in a Boardroom; is different from a performance in a music venue; is different from a hostile public meeting of local residents with issues, resentment and revenge in their hearts! Whilst all of these situations (and many others) call in fundamental terms for information to be imparted and sometimes the opportunity for questions to be asked and answered, each represents a very different presenting context. It is that context which will determine how one approaches the presenting situation, in both substance and style.

But whatever the content, whatever the context, whatever the style, there is one common factor across virtually all contexts, for virtually all presenters and performers: Performance Anxiety.

## Performance Anxiety:

Even in the context of professional public performance in its truest sense, we find that Performance Anxiety is a very common problem, even for experienced performers. Indeed, some of the *most* experienced:

**Andrew Denton:** ...you mentioned this new show that you say you dread. What do you dread?

**Barry Humphries:** Stage fright. You know, I think a lot of people think that we are nerveless people in the theatre; that we don't feel that kind of terror which traditionally anyone who has to do any public speaking feels. It's meant to be one of the great fears, isn't it? People have nightmares about having to give speeches in public. It's worse for actors, because our livelihood depends on it. You see (*to audience*), yours doesn't. You can make a fool of yourself, if necessary. And so can I, and so I will! But...it's just the terrible... butterflies, you know. It is that anxiety.

(*'Enough Rope'* 26 May 2003)

Certainly in the music performance context, one musician whom I have coached in an effort to minimise their performance anxiety, whose virtuosity I would consider puts them amongst the top 5-10% of exponents of their particular instruments in the world, is, despite their widely acknowledged and unquestioned skill, so seriously afflicted by performance anxiety that they rarely perform in public. I consider this close to criminal.

But, given that according to Miller (2002), public performance, 'often produces the same degree of emotional panic as meeting a tiger' (accessed: 29/11/2007), is this really all that surprising?

There are, as Miller further notes, 'few activities that can produce tension and anxiety as quickly and as thoroughly as performing in public'. This view is supported by Leisner (1995), whose succinctly articulated view quite correctly applies it to the wider human population by making the point that 'performance anxiety affects almost everyone, from the beginner to the most seasoned professional. It is truly remarkable what paranoid ingenuity most of us generate during performance in order to defeat ourselves' (accessed: 29/11/2007).

The notion of 'defeating ourselves', rather than someone or something external defeating us, is a very powerful one indeed. In my own experience as both a performer and a performance coach, I have observed and indeed lived the destructive effects of negative

thoughts creeping into one's performance consciousness; before, during, and even after the performance. As performers and/or presenters we become, when the 'overload of Adrenalin...enters the bloodstream' (Miller, 2002), hyper-sensitive: to criticism (self and others); to technical/performance errors; to minor distractions; to physical irritations and self-doubts etc. And whilst we are all individual human beings and therefore individual presenters/performers, and we each manifest our performance anxiety in individual ways, there are certainly some classic symptoms common to most of us.

In general terms, as Miller's research (accessed: 29/11/2007) indicates, we experience:

Feelings of fear and apprehension...accompanied by increased and prolonged physiological arousal. Severe anxiety is where the arousal is too high for optimal performance. This arousal may be normal and temporary, or abnormal and long lasting and symptoms can be cognitive, behavioural and physiological.

(Miller 2002, [http://www.mostlywind.co.uk/performance\\_anxiety.html](http://www.mostlywind.co.uk/performance_anxiety.html))

In more specific terms, under these broad categories of cognitive, behavioural, and physiological symptoms, there are the obvious manifestations of performance anxiety which most of us have experienced at some time:

Physiological reactions...include difficulty concentrating, loss of appetite, increased heart rate, and shortness of breath, dizziness, butterflies, shaking knees, shaking hands and sweaty palms ...and these physiological reactions interfere with performing by making it difficult to control finger actions and breathing. Cognitive symptoms of anxiety include fear of making mistakes and feelings of inadequacy and worrying about things happening. Behavioural symptoms are not being able to do things, which normally happen naturally.

(Miller, 2002, [http://www.mostlywind.co.uk/performance\\_anxiety.html](http://www.mostlywind.co.uk/performance_anxiety.html)  
Accessed 29/11/2007)

One of the not so obvious symptoms of performance anxiety is inadvertently speeding up one's performance. In the music performance context for instance, Clarke (2002, p. 61) argues that 'the stability (or otherwise) of the higher-level tempo shape can be...directly attributed to the stability of the performer's representation of the music: a performer with a clear and definite conception of a piece of music, and the requisite technical skills, is more likely to play it in a controlled and reproducible manner'. However, this would appear to not take into account the negative effects of performance anxiety.

Not only might the music itself be played too quickly, but indeed one's entire performance might similarly be too fast; including the between-song banter – the direct communication - with the audience. The fumbling, mumbling, speediness; and not

allowing the performance to 'settle', can have a negative effect on the perceptions of the audience, such that even the audience themselves may become somewhat anxious at the performer's discernible discomfort and anxiety.

The tempo in performance may feel perfectly fine at the time. But with 'fight or flight' adrenaline coursing through one's body, the tempo which feels perfectly normal at the time turns out to be, when heard on a recording playback, much faster than it should be or that the music itself can comfortably sustain. As well as having a negative effect aesthetically, playing too fast simply makes the music more difficult to play technically, as the fingers have to move that much faster than the music either needs to be, or than the tempo rehearsed. This in itself can inevitably create technical errors, which in turn promote anxiety. So, in our already hypersensitive performance state, an exponentially spiralling cycle of anxiety is created.

This problem is equally shared by and applicable to corporate presenters. We speak too fast; we fumble about trying to get off stage as quickly as possible; we make mistakes; and we therefore become increasingly anxious. Consequently, we lose professional credibility.

What can be done?

In my experience, the very *worst* thing a performer or presenter can do is, a) assume that they should not be nervous before a performance, and then; b) give themselves a hard time when they inevitably *are* nervous. There is no point in trying to 'not be nervous'. By simply accepting the fact that one is going to be nervous, to some degree or other, one's level of performance anxiety may be reduced and/or redirected. As Valentine notes, 'it is therapeutically beneficial to accept anxiety as a natural element of performance and to use the consequent tension to mobilise one's preparation...for instance shifting attention from the anxiety to the task' (2002, pp. 176-177).

In technical terms, there are any number of relaxation and other techniques such as cognitive-behavioural therapy, meditation, acupuncture, etc., which have been applied to the problem of performance anxiety – some more successfully than others. Medication is generally an undesirable option due to possible performance-threatening side-effects such as 'impair(ed) function and judgement' (Valentine 2002, pp. 174-175), and which also of course 'can be addictive if taken habitually'. Whilst there is some conflict of opinion as to the most appropriate treatment for performance anxiety, what is clear from

the research is that different techniques work for different people and different performance situations.

But whichever technique works best for whichever individual, paradoxically, performers and presenters *should not attempt to reduce their nervous energy too much.*

Nerves give an 'edge' to performance. Provided the anxiety is not overwhelming, having some degree of nerves has the positive effect of energising the performance. Indeed, one of Britain's most experienced and internationally acclaimed performers, Dame Judi Dench, in a backstage interview once described pre-performance nerves as, 'the batteries of performance'. However anecdotal this may be, it is confirmed in hard research terms by prominent music/psychology researcher Elizabeth Valentine (2002) who suggests that, 'a certain amount of anxiety is normal and indeed beneficial, turning a dull performance into a lively and exciting one' (p. 178). And, interestingly, the research also demonstrated that 'anxiety facilitated performance more for those with a greater degree of task mastery' – suggesting that those musicians whose technical skill and preparation levels were greater, benefited most from the positive effects of performance anxiety.

This notion is again directly applicable to the corporate presenting environment. There is essentially no difference between these two contexts when it comes to performance anxiety and its problem/benefit dichotomy.

Anecdotally, in my own 30 year performance experience I know that on the very odd occasion that I was *not* nervous, I would become very concerned, knowing that I would have to work essentially twice as hard to achieve engagement with both the performance material and the audience. Nerves provide for the performer/presenter and their performance; that spark, that 'zing' that 'edge' - indeed, that Presence.



This view about the positive effects of some level of anxiety is supported by Miller (2002) whose research also indicates that:

Many researchers (e.g. Hamann & Sobaje 1983) believe that far from being a negative influence, 'State' anxiety (When a person's anxiety levels are affected by a situation) *has motivational and drive properties that are of benefit to performance*. Kemp (1996) also thinks anxiety can be motivational. Arousal can be enhanced by anxiety and therefore heightens the degrees of sensitivity and imagination. *In other words, a small amount of anxiety is not only normal but also it is helpful and necessary to perform tasks more efficiently*. Hamann and Sobaje (1983) showed that levels of 'state' anxiety *could actually assist a performance*. Clearly this correlates with research (Steptoe 1989 and Hallam 1998) and the Yerkes-Dodson law (Eysenck 1998)... (emphasis added)

(Miller 2002, [http://www.mostlywind.co.uk/performance\\_anxiety.html](http://www.mostlywind.co.uk/performance_anxiety.html)  
Accessed 29/11/2007)

This view is also supported by Leisner (1995) who, in his *Six Golden Rules of Conquering Performance Anxiety*, encourages performers to celebrate anxiety's positive influence on their performance and to 'let the adrenaline and your genuine lively passion for the music come through'. Further support for the notion of maintaining some level of performance anxiety is, perhaps surprisingly, to be found in the work of Lin, Chang, Zermom & Midlarsky (2007), in their study on the effect of Chan (Zen) Meditation on Performance Anxiety and Performance Quality. They concluded that:

The meditation group, however, seemed to benefit... in that performance quality actually increased with increases in reported performance anxiety levels. Perhaps the anxiety scores reflect awareness of internal (physiological) states that are typically associated with anxious feelings.

(Lin, et al. 2007. p. 10)

Assuming that one can control the nerves to some extent and is not 'crippled by fear', there are ways of utilising nerves to advantage. There are also ways of reducing to an acceptable degree, and masking performance anxiety, by utilising the techniques described below.

In the first instance, and at the risk of 'stating the bleeding obvious', one of the best ways of reducing performance anxiety, whether in a performance or a presentation, is to be prepared. It is quite astounding how many people step onto a stage for a performance or presentation, under-prepared. 'Bleeding obvious' though it may indeed be, sufficient preparation and rehearsal are among the best ways of reducing performance anxiety.

Another crucial aspect of that preparation and rehearsal, beyond just preparation and rehearsal of the material itself and hence reducing performance anxiety, lies in discovering and exploiting ways in which to 'take command of the space'.

## **Taking Command of the Space:**

Whatever presenting situation we find ourselves in, one of the most fundamental aspects of being in control of that presentation is to 'Take Command of the Space' - both the internal mental space, and the external physical space.

What this means is that the presenter creates a presentation space which is so familiar that it goes beyond just comfortable, but indeed provides an inner (mental), and outer (physical) environment within which the presenter feels, literally, secure and protected. It is safe; it is familiar; it is a place where that presenter truly 'belongs'. It is a place where that presenter can feel confident. Indeed, the underlying yet fundamental purpose of rehearsal is not just to 'practise the presentation', but equally to practise 'being *in* the presentation' and ideally, in the actual presentation space - so that one becomes familiar, comfortable, and confident with both. 'Taking Command of the Space' helps the presenter be in control; and being in control means, by default, that the level of performance anxiety is inevitably reduced.

Taking Command of the Space is one of *the* most crucial aspects of presenting.

There is little more anxiety-provoking than walking into a presentation situation having never seen the venue before, let alone rehearsed in it. It would be safe to say that no actor, musician, or performer *ever* goes into a performance space without first rehearsing in it. Or, at the very least, having stepped into and walked around the space, in order to get a 'feel' for and sense of that space. Why should it be any different for the presenter?

There are a number of things we can do as presenters which will, if not absolutely guarantee our presenting environment, then at least go some way towards making us feel that we are in familiar and safe territory. In order to take command of the space, what we first need to do is to 'reduce our variables'.

## Reducing Your Variables:

What does this mean?

By 'reducing your variables' what I mean is that as a presenter, one reduces the number of unpleasant surprises with which one might be confronted – each of which undermines one's confidence and therefore one's presentation as a whole. There are many aspects to reducing those variables, including knowing one's material, and pre-checking the technical status of the presentation equipment etc.

But one of *the* most fundamental ways of reducing our variables is to set the physical parameters. Setting one's physical parameters, knowing our physical landscape by surrounding ourselves with familiar things in familiar places, reduces our variables. This reduces the possibility of unpleasant and disruptive surprises which undermine our preparation and confidence - for both the current and future presentations.

However, important as the external physical landscape is, we must also concern ourselves with our *internal* mental landscape – the 'internal space'.

## The Internal Space:

Knowing one's material as well as one possibly can is crucial. And it is surprisingly easy to lose sight of that fact. What feels 'comfortable and easy' in rehearsal, can suddenly feel terrifyingly under-prepared upon stepping out in front of an audience.

In my experience, both as a performer myself and in coaching other presenters/performers, the best preparation is to rehearse until one is sick of hearing oneself. Over-rehearse, so that the material is almost 'playing itself'. This frees up at least some of one's consciousness, allowing the performer/presenter to allocate some percentage of their concentration to the non-content aspects of the presentation. As Davidson (2005, p. 217) states, in the musical performance context, 'having the skill to play automatically, and also the potential to focus consciously on detail if necessary is a *desired state of mastery*' (emphasis added).

Over-rehearsing allows one the freedom to truly explore beyond just the technical details, and into the character, personality, and nuance of the presentation itself. Whilst you as the performer/presenter might be bored stiff with over-rehearsal, the crucial thing to remember is that it will very likely be the first time your audience has ever seen or heard you and your material. It will be fresh for them, and their very presence makes it fresh(er) for you the presenter. Because we rarely experience nerves in rehearsal, a quick cursory run-through can easily lull us into a false sense of security, and we mistakenly believe that the presentation is 'locked in our minds'. In the absence of adrenaline it is very easy to assume that, 'it'll be right on the night'. It rarely is.

The reality of having many pairs of eyes drilling into us and having adrenaline coursing through our bodies in performance is what makes performance so vastly different from rehearsal. We invariably find ourselves in an unfamiliar environment, with a different 'feel' around us, and all those people and their expectations (real or imagined), compounded by our own expectations (realistic or unrealistic). Everything is different. 'Some distraction, usually minor, occurs, and we become less and less able to concentrate. The results are nervousness, memory lapses, technical errors and general discomfort with and, ultimately, fear of performing' (Leisner 1995).

This is precisely why we have to reduce as many variables as possible, and rehearse until we are sick of hearing ourselves. It may well be the first time for your audience, but for the performer/presenter, the first time you present your material should *never* be 'the first time you present your material'.

When actors and dancers rehearse, they will invariably do several Dress Rehearsals, in the actual performance space, prior to the opening performance. They do this precisely so that their bodies, minds (conscious and unconscious), and perceptions, are as familiar as possible not only with their dialogue and movement, but equally with the detailed topography of their physical environment: the feel of the floor under their feet; the weight, fall and flow of their costume; the texture and substance of their props; the focussed heat and distracting blindness of the stage lighting. The only ingredient missing is the audience.

Through repeated Dress Rehearsals, performers 'reduce their variables'. They conduct 'a mental and physical preparation which aims to control or optimise arousal' (Davidson 2001, p. 237).

It is thus that seasoned performers will fill up their internal (mental) space with the fine details of not only the performance content itself, but also the peripheral minutiae of the performance environment. They will utilise to their advantage, that 'overload of adrenalin (in) the bloodstream' (Miller 2002); that hyper-sensitivity referred to earlier, to form their own personal 'bubble of concentration'. This bubble of concentration is filled with the most minute detail: physical; mental; environmental; and observational, required to not just 'get them through' the performance, but indeed to fine-tune, energise, vitalise, and bring that indefinable 'zing' and spark of life to the performance.

## **The External Space:**

In parallel with that 'internal' space, it is equally important to control, as much as humanly possible, the 'external' physical space within which we are presenting.

What this means is that by surrounding oneself with the familiar in terms of the space one occupies; the props; instruments; etc., the performance environment carries fewer unpredictable elements and therefore fewer distractions - and therefore, fewer things to potentially go wrong.

Of course some of one's performance elements such as projection screens, lecterns, podiums etc., might well be virtually the same. However, in an unfamiliar venue there are always differences from what one is used to: the physical environment; the space immediately surrounding the performer; the shape and size; the distance from the audience; the sightlines; how many steps from this point to that; the acoustics; the overall 'feel'. In order to achieve that sense of familiarity, to create a safe, secure, and familiar performance environment, one needs to set the physical parameters.

## Setting Your Physical Parameters:

Whilst we may not have control over the venue as a whole, one of the things that we *do* have some control over as a presenter, is the physical space we ourselves occupy and use; even within that unfamiliar venue. There are things we can organise and/or request which make one's life as a presenter in that unfamiliar venue a little more under control.

As a touring performer some years ago I designed for myself a touring Set which, whilst it was stylistically minimal, not only transformed each space visually for the audience, but also provide me with a predictable, familiar, safe, secure, performance environment within which I knew precisely how many steps it took to get from one point to another throughout my performance. Whilst as a presenter it is obviously impractical or perhaps even impossible to carry one's own Set around, what we *can* do is determine and set our own physical parameters within the venue in which we are working. Beyond just making this venue more familiar and safe, it allows us to better plan and more accurately control, the content and delivery of our material, and utilise that venue to our best advantage. In other words, we 'Take Command of the Space'.

By applying performance principles in order to control – as much as possible - the variables such as the venue, our physicality, our material, and hopefully our performance anxiety, it is possible to utilise and apply the tools and techniques of the performing artist, within and to the context of the professional or corporate presentation, and thus take advantage of everything the performance context has to offer.

Interestingly, however, it seems that not all performing artists take full advantage of this inter-contextuality themselves.

## The Performance of Presentation and the Presentation of Performance:

While the performing artist is in the act of performing, they are, hopefully at least, communicating closely and effectively with their audience: 'It's your job, really, (to) take people on an emotional journey so you have to really throw yourself into that' (Blunt 2006). However, in those non-performance moments, when the artist (performing or

otherwise) has to communicate to other interested parties such as investors, interviewers, sponsors etc., they may become a mess of inarticulate babbling, simply because they are not in 'performance' mode and are thus ill-prepared, unrehearsed and unconvincing - thereby potentially sending out an entirely inappropriate message.

Upon recently discussing this notion with a group of executive workshop participants, one observed that perhaps this was 'the reason why so many award-acceptance speeches are so incredibly awful', and the performing artist comes across so badly.

This might, on observation, be difficult to refute, supporting the argument that (if we apply the notion of the individual artist as a 'mini-corporation'), this is a perfect example of how, in non-performance mode, that mini-corporate executive might have 'blown it' in that crucial moment of influence; when applying even a modest amount of performance-awareness and effort might have dramatically improved the situation, and created a very different 'first impression'.

Given the above, it might at this juncture be opportune to revisit that possibility of a nexus between the aforementioned 'Arty Wankers' and 'Commercial Crap', because it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the application of performance principles to professional communication is not all 'one-way traffic'.

## One-Way Traffic?

Contrary to popular belief, there is nothing inherently ennobling about living the cliché of the 'starving artist'. This is a reality. Besides that reality, valid or not, earning money also creates the *perception* that one is a 'successful' artist.

- money legitimises one as a professional artist.
- money liberates one as a professional artist.
- money actually *defines* one as a 'professional' artist.

It is a fairly safe assumption that most artists would not immediately associate themselves with the term 'corporate'. However, as a business – SME or micro-business – the individual artist (or indeed collection of individual artists coming together for a project) has to deal with many of the same issues, such as:

- sourcing investment/funding
- project planning and monitoring
- creating their product/service (art)
- promotion and marketing
- attracting significant numbers of audience/consumers
- hiring staff/technical support
- costs of doing business
- managing sales
- dealing with suppliers and other business entities
- financial reporting
- dealing with media, etc, etc

This view is supported by Craig Mudge (2006, p. 16), Director of Macquarie University's Institute for Innovation, who recently wrote with reference to executives 'making meaning', that, 'frequently artistic people do not have the skills to fully capitalise and exploit their talents'. And further, that 'Artists and other creative people can learn how to be enterprising without sacrificing their integrity. They can learn the skills that will empower them to make meaning'.

Not only can artists learn about, and have much to learn from business, but it is absolutely crucial for their professional survival that they must; whether they want to or not, or whether they believe they can or not. Because, leaving aside those aforementioned 'corrupt multinationals', no-one does 'business' better than *Business* does business. As Mudge observes, 'many creative people, especially when young, may believe enterprise and innovation are categories that more properly belong to the suits - the business types and their beancounters'.

No matter how philosophically unpalatable the notion of 'business' and entrepreneurship might appear - at the time when artists just want to get on with the art - in the interests of simple survival, one reaches the point as an artist of literally being *forced* to become 'the entrepreneur you are, when you're not an entrepreneur' (Willems & Hughes-Lucas 2004) and to regard one's work, or at least the promotion of that work, as a business. Artists may not regard themselves as 'corporate' but any differences are, in my view, essentially just a matter of scale and possibly style of approach.



What, fundamentally, is the difference between a corporate 'beancounter' (as Mudge refers to them) seeking investment in a business project, and a professional artist seeking investment in their creative project? In terms of survival - business or artistic - it is about professional interaction. It is about any kind of professional interaction, in any kind of professional context. The consistent underlying requirement being that of *effective communication*, of:

- an idea
- a concept
- a business plan
- a film script
- an artwork

There is an undeniable symbiosis between Art and Business. They can, and indeed do: *intersect, interact, and inform* each other, and therefore they do support each other.

Whether we are referring to:

- Actors
- CEOs
- Executives
- Board members
- Politicians
- Sportspeople
- Television presenters
- Musicians
- Scientists
- Educators

there is much to be gained - across these disparate and diverse disciplines, dealings and contexts - from the notion of the 'performance of presentation' and the 'presentation of performance'.

*There is the fundamental need to communicate.*

Given that fundamental need to communicate, and the discussion in this paper of how one might enhance that communication by applying mime skills to corporate

communication: whatever the discussion; whatever the theory; whatever the mime techniques; or whatever 'Stylised Version of You' applied; ultimately, we are left with the question: 'But does any of this actually work in the real world?' How do we substantiate the claim that it does?

*We test it.*

Ultimately, like all theory, until we actually test it we do not know whether or not it is even remotely valid or simply some fanciful notion. We therefore need to apply the theory and principles to the practice. And then assess the outcomes.

## Putting It All Together:

The application of mime performance techniques to the physicality and non-verbals of professional communication; the 'Stylised Version of You' as described and discussed above, has since 2003 already been and continues to be tested. Applied, tested, and fine-tuned, in the real world of corporate coaching – from the very highest levels of CEOs; Board members; Senior Executive Teams, down through middle management and operatives in both the public and private sectors, encompassing: Finance; Resources; Manufacturing; Scientific; Infrastructure Services; International Trade; Political, and Education sectors. The work ranges in scale literally from global multinational corporations down to SMEs and micro-businesses.

But whatever the scale of the operation, there is an inescapable and fundamental consistency. There is, as stated earlier, that 'fundamental need' for communication - human communication through human interaction. And there is nothing more fundamental to human communication and interaction than body-language, whether we are aware of it or not. And the fact remains that in the majority of cases, it is *not* consciously recognised by professionals who participate in workshops and coaching sessions - until they are confronted with that (conscious) reality.

Being thus confronted can be confronting indeed. Yet, not unlike overcoming performance anxiety in the traditional performance context, there is an overwhelming sense of achievement in overcoming the 'opening night nerves', as evidenced by participant feedback such as: 'very confronting but fun – will use (the techniques) in

future'; '(because of) my fear of public speaking I was pushed way out of my comfort zone'. Others have found it equally confronting but simultaneously: 'empowering - you made us step out of our comfort zone by completing challenging exercises'; 'It's been a pleasure – challenging and inspirational'. Still others are able to extrapolate beyond their own immediate circumstances to the broader professional environment: 'I think it teaches skills relevant to any person's working life'; and recognise the value of the 'theatrical component/influence and acknowledgement of differences'. That uniqueness of each presenter's Physical Personality.

Whilst as a coach in movement and body-language it is immensely gratifying to receive positive feedback relating specifically to that physicality and body-language coaching - 'Extremely useful - the physical movement stuff was great' – what is even more gratifying is that feedback which demonstrates that when all of the non-verbal elements come together, the entire 'package' works; everything falls into place; it becomes greater than the sum of the parts and functions holistically on many levels. As articulated by a particular executive who received one-on-one coaching and who writes:

I undertook a half day presentation skills coaching session with Chris Willems in preparation for undertaking a senior project management and organisational change role for the (State) Government. I greatly benefited from Chris's expertise and valuable insights in this area. The session helped *make me much more aware of how best to project myself and build upon my innate abilities in presentation and meeting scenarios* where I needed to *quickly establish authority and influence* in order to fulfil my role successfully. Above all the session helped me *gain the confidence and technique required* to undertake a difficult role and achieve successful project outcomes (emphasis added)

(Business operator/government consultant - email communication, 11/3/2009)

It is that integration of all the elements: the physical awareness; the conscious control; the application of techniques to 'take command of the space' – both internal and external; the ability to thus 'establish authority' and exert influence on perceptions – both internal and external - hence developing increased confidence which then positively feeds on itself. As client feedback confirms, 'everything was designed to make me more aware of the image I was portraying and how it did/didn't align with my own perceptions of myself'.

It is the abstract, indefinable sense of all of those elements coming together and manifesting as 'physical presence' - *'enabl(ing) me to create the presence I need to be influential'* (emphasis added).

*Thank you for making me feel prepared and confident. It definitely made a difference*

(International conference presenter - email communication, 19/12/2007)

*Thank you, thank you, thank you...for equipping our team with the skills and confidence they needed to present to the level that they did... they have taken a quantum leap forward*

(Marketing advisor - email communication, 26/10/2008)

## **Conclusion:**

In conclusion then, it would appear that the '*Arty Wankers*' and those purveyors of '*Commercial Crap*' might actually have something to offer each other. And, one never knows, in the overall scheme of things, even we '*Academic Wankers with no professional credibility whatsoever*', might also have a role to play in the analysis and research of this symbiotic process.

So, what has Mime got to do with Corporate Communication?

In answer to that question, I earlier defined Mime as the *Analysis, Manipulation, and Stylisation* of body-language. In my experience, that applies equally to both the performance and corporate communication contexts. The only difference, as outlined above, is simply a matter of the 'degree of stylisation'. And by utilising mime techniques to determine, control, and apply that stylisation, one is able to achieve:

- Clear
- Concise
- Credible
- (Choreographed)

## ***Communication.***

So, next time we pack our Corporate Briefcase, we should not forget to also pack our *Manual of Mime & Movement*. Because the performance principles embedded therein, might just prove to be our best corporate coach and colleague.

**Christiaan Willems** *GradDipArtsAdmin MA*

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## Appendix 1:

### Client feedback comments - various

- I enjoyed the presentation (exercises), even though it was out of my comfort zone
- very engaging
- extremely relevant
- I think it teaches skills relevant to any person's working life
- while I don't particularly enjoy doing presentations I found the way the sessions were handled was excellent
- presentation (exercises) were the least enjoyable, but the most beneficial
- building confidence
- highly recommended
- Terrifying! But useful and fun
- skills and knowledge gained - very relevant and very applicable to my job
- provided constructive feedback in an encouraging manner and made a terrifying topic (to me anyway) fun
- Extremely relevant. My job relies heavily on good communication
- While I found (doing) the presentations very daunting and uncomfortable, unfortunately there's no other way to learn and receive honest and constructive feedback
- extremely beneficial to my work
- I found that I am empowered and re-energised after the course and excited to start implementing some of the things I have learnt to improve my area
- Extremely relevant. These skills will enable me to create the presence I need to be influential
- I will be able to apply these skills on a daily basis
- Fantastic
- 'Empowering' - you made us step out of our comfort zone by completing challenging exercises
- a valuable but stressful experience
- Extremely good. It was a useful exercise to be able to apply our learnings through presentations and get immediate feedback on our performance

- (because of) my fear of public speaking I was pushed way out of my comfort zone
- It's been a pleasure – challenging and inspirational
- Extremely useful - the physical movement stuff was great
- Highly recommended course...This is the most useful course that I have attended
- Was extremely useful at giving an increased awareness of myself but also of other team members
- Sensational. I have taught similar professional skill sets. You have taught me more
- Theatrical component/influence and acknowledgement of differences
- Everything...was designed to make me more aware of the image I was portraying and how it did/didn't align with my own perceptions of myself
- There was a good mix between the theory and practical. The day flew
- If I could afford it, it would be great to give each team member individual coaching.
- I was delighted with the outcome, even better than I anticipated
- Thank you for making me feel prepared and confident. It definitely made a difference.
- Thank you, thank you, thank you ... for equipping our team with the skills and confidence they needed to present to the level that they did... they have taken a quantum leap forward
- many thanks for the fantastic presentation skills training session. I have heard nothing but positive feedback from all who attended
- I undertook a half day presentation skills coaching session with Chris Willems in preparation for undertaking a senior project management and organisational change role for the (State) Government. I greatly benefited from Chris's expertise and valuable insights in this area. The session helped make me much more aware of how best to project myself and build upon my innate abilities in presentation and meeting scenarios where I needed to quickly establish authority and influence in order to fulfil my role successfully. Above all the session helped me gain the confidence and technique required to undertake a difficult role and achieve successful project outcomes.

## Appendix 2:

### C.W. Biography

CHRISTIAAN WILLEMS *GradDipArtsAdmin. GradCertTTL. MA.*

*Mime Artist, Director, Designer, Performance Coach & Songwriter*

Professional Biography (as at May 2008)

**CHRISTIAAN WILLEMS** has worked extensively in almost every aspect of the performing arts and television - as a performer (specialising in Mime), writer, director, designer, musician, producer and lecturer. Christiaan began his artistic career as a musician in the 1970's with seminal Brisbane band '*Silas Farm*' (<http://www.silasfarm.com/>) – starting a musical journey which ultimately led him into theatre and television.

This evolving artistic focus took Christiaan to London in the early 1980's where he studied both Mime and Television Design simultaneously, and he has, since that time, continued to specialise in both of these areas - applying them to a diversity of creative projects for both stage and screen. His Stage work has been presented from the outback to the Sydney Opera House, Adelaide Festival Centre, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, whilst his work in Television includes BBC, ABC, SBS, commercial and independent productions.

In addition, Christiaan's involvement in the Adelaide Festival and Fringe; Montreux, Banff and New York Video Festivals; Melbourne Film Festival; Queensland Biennial Festival of Music, Commonwealth Games Festival, and others, bears testament to his innovative, multi-disciplined approach to and achievements in artistic practice.

In 1990 Christiaan brought his parallel specialisations of Television Design and Movement together in a unique stage-to-screen adaptation of his solo stage show '*Son of Romeo*'. This program achieved international sales, broadcast and awards and was, subsequent to being nominated for an International Emmy, and due to its '*innovative use of the medium*', included in the permanent collection of the **Museum of Television and Radio** in New York.

Throughout this diverse career, Music has never been far from Christiaan's artistic work - invariably finding its way into his stage and television productions. He has recently returned to it – culminating in 2005 with the launch of his first solo album, *'Trust No-One'*, followed more recently (2007) by his second solo album, *'Once In a While'* (<http://music.artsmedia.com.au>). This album, which forms part of Christiaan's current Doctoral research, was recorded utilising a unique collaborative process – and some of the best musicians around – and was a 'Feature Album' on ABC Radio within two weeks of its completion.

In the tertiary and professional education sectors, Christiaan has lectured at QUT, Griffith University, is currently a *Lecturer in Design & Performance for Stage & Screen* at USQ and is a guest lecturer at University of the Sunshine Coast in *'Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship'*. In addition, Christiaan coaches television presenters, journalists, actors and performers in other tertiary and professional contexts, including specialist Presenter training for corporate executives who need to present, and represent their organisations - either live or on-camera for corporate videos, videoconferencing and/or internet distribution.

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